

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 029653

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, UR

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL QUERY ON EMBASSY CONTACTS AND
POUCH PROCEDURES

REF: A. MOSCOW 0999, B. MOSCOW 0891, C. MOSCOW 223,
D. 77 MOSCOW 16951

1. CONGRESSMAN PAUL SIMON HAS WRITTEN THE SECRETARY THE
FOLLOWING LETTER:
2. QUOTE I SUPPORT THE ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS TO
ENCOURAGE THE EXPRESSION AND ACHIEVEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
IN OTHER COUNTRIES.
3. QUOTE I AM CONCERNED THAT RECENT ACTIONS BY AMERICAN
AMBASSADOR TO THE SOVIET UNION MALCOLM TOON MAY BE UNDER-
MINING OUR PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS OF SUPPORT FOR SUCH
EFFORTS. TRADITIONALLY, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 STATE 029653

ASSISTED DISCREETLY THE DISSIDENT MOVEMENT IN THE SOVIET
UNION. THIS POSTURE WAS DEFENSIBLE AND SUCCESSFUL, AND
SHOULD BE CONTINUED.

4. QUOTE RECENT PRESS REPORTS INDICATE THAT AMBASSADOR
TOON HAS INSTITUTED A NEW RULE REQUIRING AMERICAN EMBASSY

OFFICIALS TO OBTAIN PRIOR CLEARANCE FROM HIM FOR ANY CONTACTS WITH SOVIET CITIZENS. WHILE I RECOGNIZE THE RIGHT OF AN AMBASSADOR TO ESTABLISH OPERATING PROCEDURES WITHIN THE EMBASSY HE HEADS, THIS ACTION HAS APPARENTLY RESULTED IN A SIGNIFICANT DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF CONTACTS BETWEEN SOVIET DISSIDENTS AND AMERICAN OFFICIALS AND BETWEEN SOVIET CITIZENS GENERALLY AND OUR EMBASSY PEOPLE. WE SHOULD NOT BE CREATING OUR OWN 'IRON CURTAIN.' THIS REPRESENTS A MARKED CHANGE IN THE ATMOSPHERE FACING SOVIET CITIZENS WHO SEEK CONTACTS WITH THE UNITED STATES AND THE WEST. WE SHOULD BE ENCOURAGING SUCH CONTACTS.

5. QUOTE IT HAS ALSO COME TO MY ATTENTION THAT A CHANGE HAS BEEN MADE IN AMERICAN POLICY REGARDING THE USE OF THE DIPLOMATIC POUCH IN THE SOVIET UNION. IN THE PAST, THE DIPLOMATIC POUCH WAS USED TO FORWARD MATERIAL TO JOURNALISTS. BECAUSE RESTRICTIONS ARE GREATER ON PACKAGES THAT JOURNALISTS RECEIVE THAN THOSE FLOWING THROUGH THE EMBASSY, THE AMERICAN EMBASSY OFTEN SERVED AS A CONDUIT FOR BOOKS AND INFORMATION.

6. QUOTE AMBASSADOR TOON'S DECISION TO END THIS PRACTICE, WHILE PERHAPS DEFENSIBLE ON OTHER GROUNDS, SEEMS TO ME TO BE INADVISABLE. BOOKS ARE, OF COURSE, A PRIMARY SOURCE OF INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION AND INFORMATION, AND WE SHOULD NOT RESTRICT THEIR DISTRIBUTION.

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PAGE 03 STATE 029653

7. I UNDERSTAND THAT THESE ARE SENSITIVE QUESTIONS. BUT I BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TRY TO REMAIN REASONABLY CONSISTENT IN ITS SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.

8. QUOTE I APPRECIATE YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS MATTER.
UNQUOTE

9. WE ARE PREPARING RESPONSE BASED ON PREVIOUS EMBASSY REPORTING ON THESE MATTERS (REFTELS) BUT BEFORE PUTTING IT IN FINAL FORM, WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING ASAP ANY VIEWS, SUGGESTIONS OR SPECIFIC LANGUAGE EMBASSY WISHES TO SUBMIT. SINCE NUMEROUS OTHER SIMILAR QUERIES ARE BEING RECEIVED, RESPONSE TO CONGRESSMAN SIMON WOULD SERVE AS BASIC SUBSTANCE FOR REPLIES. VANCE

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